

Congress would now have the correct judgment to insist that its Members and the Americans each of us represent be considered in this critically important conversation. Passing the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act is key to ensuring that happens, and in the process of doing so, we will ensure that the voices of all Americans are heard with the kind of robust amendment process I mentioned on the floor last week.

In that vein, we appreciate the Democratic leader's comments about an open amendment process where, no matter how a person feels about this bill, they will have an opportunity to offer amendments. I appreciate his supportive comments, and we encourage Senators to come to the floor today and to offer their amendments.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I express my appreciation publicly—I have done so privately—for the good work done by Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN, the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. They have done remarkably good work and exemplary work for us. Getting consensus on anything in the Senate is very hard. In spite of the monumental task they faced, the chair and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN, were able to do just that with their Iran legislation. These two good Senators have worked very hard to find a middle ground that satisfies both Congress and the administration. I think they have done that.

The Corker-Cardin bill allows Congress to vote on a final agreement. It also provides for immediate reinstitution of the sanctions should Iran breach the terms of the agreement. After weeks of bipartisan negotiations, the Foreign Relations Committee reported the Corker-Cardin legislation with a unanimous 19-to-0 vote.

I, along with many of my Senate Democratic colleagues, support this legislation. In fact, I think all Democrats would support this legislation. Senators CORKER and CARDIN worked very hard to strike a very delicate balance. Now we must protect that delicate balance by working together to avoid major changes that could imperil the success of the bill.

I hope we can move forward with the same spirit of bipartisanship that got us here and bring the bill to a vote as quickly as possible. However, a number of my Republican colleagues stated publicly, in their efforts to be the Republican nominee for President, what they want to do with this bill. I am concerned that they and others want to

use this good, bipartisan piece of legislation as a platform for their political ambitions. This bill is too important to be a pawn in anyone's political game. I have told Senator CORKER and Senator CARDIN that I will support their efforts to preserve their work.

As we move forward, I am hoping we can all work together in the bipartisan spirit in which this bill was crafted and keep our eyes on the ultimate goal of preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

Having said that, I am very concerned about some statements made by my friend, the vote counter for the Senate Republicans, the senior Senator from Texas. He said in Politico—I am not going to state his full quote but basically enough to get the idea:

Some of 'em might pass. I think it's going to be an interesting dance. . . . There are some that are interesting, that will be hard to vote against.

This is a bill which was brought to the Senate floor on a bipartisan basis. We should continue on that basis. It shouldn't be up to Democrats to kill these vexatious amendments; we should get some help from our Republican colleagues.

I look forward to this debate. It is important for the country. It is important for the world. I am grateful for the work done by those two good Senators. I just hope it is not maligned, messed up, and denigrated as a result of political posturing.

#### THE BUDGET

Mr. REID. Mr. President, when I first came to the Senate and when I served in the House, conference committees were an important part of the business we did here in Congress. But in recent years—very recent years—going to conference hasn't been what it used to be.

Going to conference on a piece of legislation used to mean there would be serious discussions and compromises that generally produced a product that could be supported by Members of both parties. It was a real conference. Democrats sat down with Republicans and in a public forum determined what should happen on that bill.

I can remember going to those conferences. They were tough, they were long, and there were a lot of compromises made. But that is what legislation is—the art of compromise. When we finished, we had a product that was supported by both parties.

That is why we used to do appropriations bills like that. Why? As an example, Senator Domenici and I for many years were the chairman and ranking member of a very important subcommittee, energy and water. It was very important, billions and billions of dollars. We did our work as a subcommittee, but then we were able to meet and work these out in conference. That is why we came to the floor. We did the bill in a few hours because everyone had had their input.

Sadly, under a Republican House and a Republican Senate, that is no longer

the case. Here is an example: the budget conference resolution. There is all the chest-beating and flexing of muscles in the press. The Republicans have a budget. They worked and worked and got it done. They finished the conference.

The Republican majorities in the House and the Senate don't even bother to show that there is a bipartisan consensus building; they just do it. Any meetings that have been had on this bill with Democrats have been strictly for show.

There is no discussion. There is no public debate. There is nothing done. It is Republicans in the House and Republicans in the Senate meeting together. I would bet that the conferences even between the House and the Senate were done mainly by the two chairs of the committees. Not a word of input on this bill—not a word of input on this bill from Democrats. It is no conference. The party already knows what they want; they are not interested in our ideas.

Forbes magazine—I don't quote Forbes magazine very often for obvious reasons. It is a very conservative news outlet, but listen to what they said, and I quote verbatim:

This will not be the start of a period of bipartisanship when it comes to budget issues. To the contrary, the budget resolution conference report that will likely be voted on this week will solely become a product of what the Republican majorities in the House and Senate wanted to do. There was little-to-no effort to involve Democrats in the negotiations because the leadership would risk losing GOP votes in both houses by doing so. They also would have risked alienating the GOP base, much of which continues to believe a compromise with congressional Democrats and the Obama administration is the political equivalent of collaborating with the enemy.

How about that; every word of this is true. It is so sad for our country when working across party lines is considered collaborating with the enemy.

I have said here on the floor many times, and I will say it again: When Obama was elected the first time, Republicans gathered here in Washington—a couple of days the meeting took, and it has been written up a lot of times—and they made two conclusions. They came to two conclusions: No. 1, we are not going to have Obama reelected. They failed miserably with that. But on the second thing they have been successful; that is, they would oppose anything and everything President Obama wanted. They have done that now for 6½ years.

What a sad day for our country.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my friend, the senior Senator from South Dakota, be recognized as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Prior to recognizing my colleague, would the Chair note the business for the day.